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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, SAN JOSE DIVISION

CHASOM BROWN, WILLIAM BYATT,
JEREMY DAVIS, CHRISTOPHER
CASTILLO, and MONIQUE TRUJILLO,
individually and on behalf of all similarly
situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

GOOGLE LLC,
Defendant.

Case No. 5:20-cv-03664-LHK-SVK

**ADMINISTRATIVE MOTION TO SEAL
JOINT LETTER BRIEF RE: DISPUTE
P16**

Referral: Hon. Susan van Keulen, USMJ

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Civil Local Rules 7-11 and 79-5, Defendant Google LLC (“Google”) respectfully seeks to seal certain portions of the parties’ Joint Letter Brief re: Dispute P16 (“Joint Letter Brief”), which contains non-public, sensitive confidential and proprietary business information that could affect Google’s competitive standing and may expose Google to increased security risks if publicly disclosed. This information is highly confidential and should be protected.

This Administrative Motion pertains for the following information contained in the Joint Letter Brief:

| Document | Portions to be Filed Under Seal | Party Claiming Confidentiality |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Joint Letter Brief | Portions Highlighted in Yellow at page 4 at lines 19, 21, 25-26, 27-28; page 5 at lines 4-5, 9-14, 22-23; page 7 at lines 23-25, 26-28; page 8 at lines 27-28; page 9 at lines 1-2, 3, 5-7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13-14, 22-23, 25; and page 10 at line 1. | Google |

II. LEGAL STANDARD

A party seeking to seal material must “establish[] that the document, or portions thereof, are privileged, protectable as a trade secret or otherwise entitled to protection under the law” (*i.e.*, is “sealable”). Civ. L.R. 79-5(b). The sealing request must also “be narrowly tailored to seek sealing only of sealable material.” *Id.*

In the context of dispositive motions, materials may be sealed in the Ninth Circuit upon a showing that there are “compelling reasons” to seal the information. *See Kamakana v. City & Cty. of Honolulu*, 447 F.3d 1172, 1179-80 (9th Cir. 2006). However, a party seeking to seal information in a non-dispositive motion must show only “good cause.” *Id.* at 1179-80. The rationale for the lower standard with respect to non-dispositive motions is that “the public has less of a need for access to court records attached only to non-dispositive motions because these documents are often unrelated, or only tangentially related, to the underlying cause of action” and that as a result “[t]he public policies that support the right of access to dispositive motions, and related materials, do not apply with equal force to non-dispositive materials.” *Kamakana*, 447 F.3d at 1179; *see also TVIIM, LLC v.*

1 *McAfee, Inc.*, 2015 WL 5116721, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 28, 2015) (“Records attached to non-
 2 dispositive motions are not subject to the strong presumption of access.”) (citation omitted). Under
 3 the “good cause” standard, courts will seal statements reporting on a company’s users, sales,
 4 investments, or other information that is ordinarily kept secret for competitive purposes. *See*
 5 *Hanginout, Inc. v. Google, Inc.*, 2014 WL 1234499, at *1 (S.D. Cal. Mar. 24, 2014); *Nitride*
 6 *Semiconductors Co. v. RayVio Corp.*, 2018 WL 10701873, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 1, 2018) (granting
 7 motion to seal “[c]onfidential and proprietary information regarding [Defendant]’s products” under
 8 “good cause” standard) (Van Keulen, J.).

9 A discovery letter brief is non-dispositive, and thus the good cause standard applies. *See e.g.*
 10 *Pieterston v. Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.*, 2018 WL 10362631, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 8, 2018) (“The
 11 parties have filed two separate motions to seal portions of the discovery letter briefs that are pending
 12 before the Court. Because the sealing requests were made in conjunction with a non-dispositive
 13 discovery motion, a showing under the good cause standard will suffice.”). Although the materials
 14 that Google seeks to seal here easily meet the higher “compelling reasons” standard, the Court need
 15 only consider whether these materials meet the lower “good cause” standard.

16 **III. THE ABOVE IDENTIFIED MATERIALS SHOULD ALL BE SEALED**

17 Courts have repeatedly found it appropriate to seal documents that contain “business
 18 information that might harm a litigant’s competitive standing.” *Nixon v. Warner Commc’ns, Inc.*, 435
 19 U.S. 589, 589-99 (1978). Good cause to seal is shown when a party seeks to seal materials that
 20 “contain[] confidential information about the operation of [the party’s] products and that public
 21 disclosure could harm [the party] by disclosing confidential technical information.” *Digital Reg of*
 22 *Texas, LLC v. Adobe Sys., Inc.*, 2014 WL 6986068, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Dec. 10, 2014). Materials that
 23 could harm a litigant’s competitive standing may be sealed even under the “compelling reasons”
 24 standard. *See e.g. Icon-IP Pty Ltd. v. Specialized Bicycle Components, Inc.*, 2015 WL 984121, at *2
 25 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 4, 2015) (information “is appropriately sealable under the ‘compelling reasons’
 26 standard where that information could be used to the company’s competitive disadvantage”) (citation
 27 omitted). Courts in this district have also determined that motions to seal may be granted as to
 28 potential trade secrets. *See, e.g. United Tactical Sys., LLC v. Real Action Paintball, Inc.*, 2015 WL

1 295584, at *3 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 21, 2015) (rejecting argument against sealing “that [the party] ha[s] not
2 shown that the substance of the information . . . amounts to a trade secret”).

3 Here the Joint Letter Brief comprises confidential and proprietary information regarding highly
4 sensitive features of Google’s internal systems and operations that Google does not share
5 publicly. Specifically, this information provides details related to internal identifiers and various data
6 logs maintained by Google, as well as Google’s internal practices with regard to the X-Client-Data
7 Header and its proprietary functions. Such information reveals Google’s internal strategies, system
8 designs, and business practices for operating and maintaining many of its important services while
9 complying with its legal and privacy obligations.

10 Public disclosure of the above-listed information would harm Google’s competitive standing it
11 has earned through years of innovation and careful deliberation, by revealing sensitive aspects of
12 Google’s proprietary systems, strategies, and designs to Google’s competitors. That alone is a proper
13 basis to seal such information. *See, e.g., Free Range Content, Inc. v. Google Inc.*, No. 14-cv-02329-
14 BLF, Dkt. No. 192, at 3-9 (N.D. Cal. May 3, 2017) (granting Google’s motion to seal certain sensitive
15 business information related to Google’s processes and policies to ensure the integrity and security of
16 a different advertising system); *Huawei Techs., Co. v. Samsung Elecs. Co.*, No. 3:16-cv-02787-WHO,
17 Dkt. No. 446, at 19 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 30, 2019) (sealing confidential sales data because “disclosure
18 would harm their competitive standing by giving competitors insight they do not have”); *Trotsky v.*
19 *Travelers Indem. Co.*, 2013 WL 12116153, at *8 (W.D. Wash. May 8, 2013) (granting motion to seal
20 as to “internal research results that disclose statistical coding that is not publically available”).

21 Moreover, if publicly disclosed, malicious actors may use such information to seek to
22 compromise Google’s internal data log and identifier systems. Google would be placed at an
23 increased risk of cyber security threats. *See, e.g., In re Google Inc. Gmail Litig.*, 2013 WL 5366963,
24 at *3 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 25, 2013) (sealing “material concern[ing] how users’ interactions with the
25 Gmail system affects how messages are transmitted” because if made public, it “could lead to a breach
26 in the security of the Gmail system”). The security threat is an additional reason for this Court to seal
27 the identified information.

1 The information Google seeks to redact, including internal identifiers and various data logs
 2 maintained by Google, as well as Google's internal practices with regard to the X-Client-Data Header
 3 and its proprietary functions, is the minimal amount of information needed to protect its internal
 4 systems and operations from being exposed to not only its competitors but also to nefarious actors
 5 who may improperly seek access to and disrupt these systems and operations. The "good cause"
 6 rather than the "compelling reasons" standard should apply but under either standard, Google's
 7 sealing request is warranted.

8 **IV. CONCLUSION**

9 For the foregoing reasons, the Court should seal the identified portions of the Joint Letter
 10 Brief.

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